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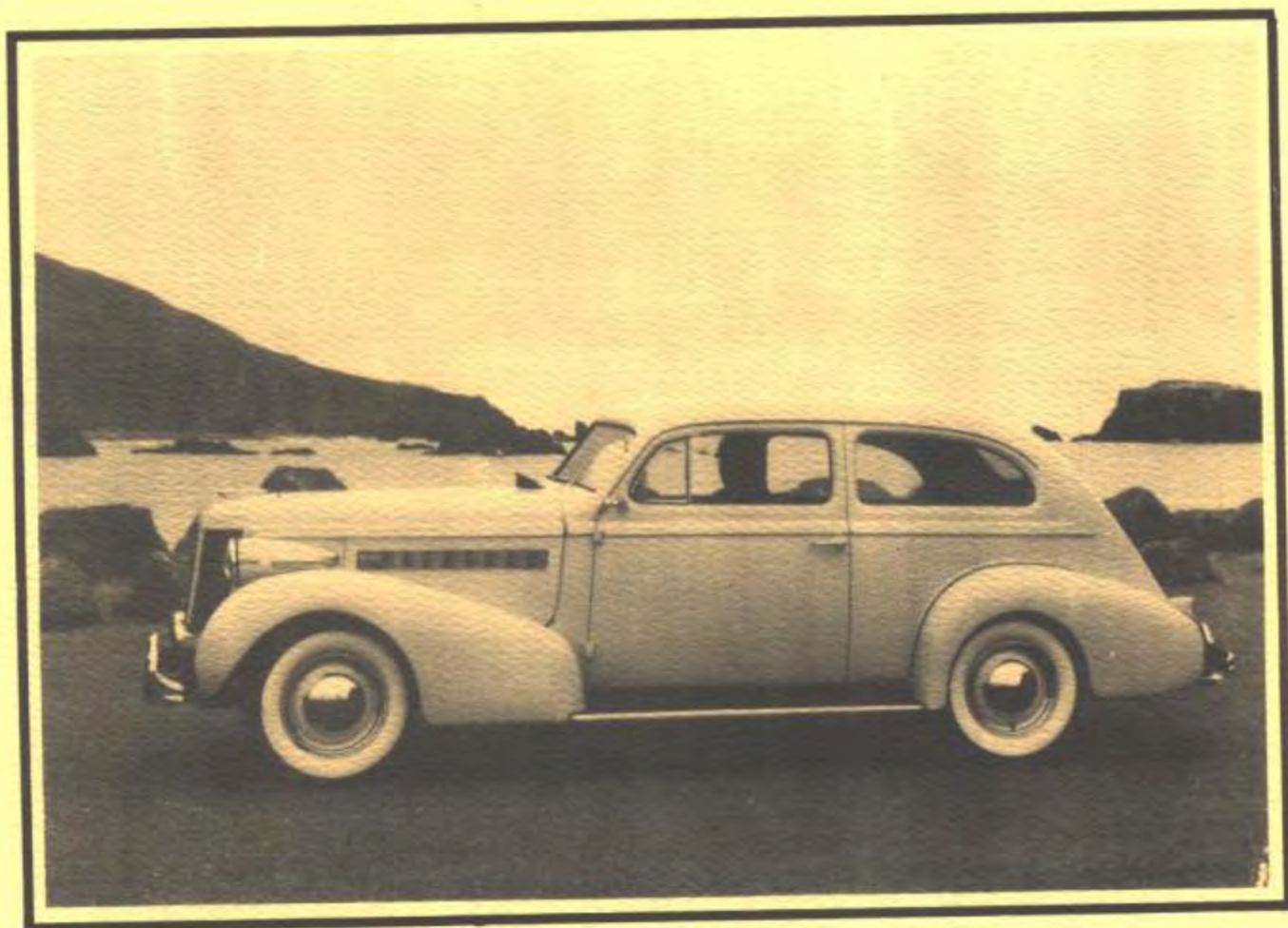
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# THE TORQUE•TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS

OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980



**Volume X • Number 1**



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Volume X, Number 1

September 1991

William E. Olson, Editor • 842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43235



## *Miscellaneous Matter*



Membership renewals are still coming in, but as I write this (September 17) there are some 125 persons whose memberships expired on August 31 yet to be heard from. This is a somewhat slower rate than in September 1990, but I am sure a fair percentage of these will eventually re-enlist. A few years ago, I took to sending out reminders around the end of September to those still delinquent. This takes some extra effort on my part, and costs perhaps 40 cents per reminder sent, but it seems worth the effort and expense. Every year some five or six come back with thanks and apologies written on them, and if a whole array of reminders recaptures but one member, the expense is covered.

Economic conditions being what they are, it would not surprise me if a greater percentage dropped out than has been the case in the past two years. However, even if we lose 100 members the Club will continue to be sound financially, because we were in August at the highest membership level ever. (Moreover, if it really came down to it, there are certain economies I could put into effect — mostly converting paid labor by the printer into my own unpaid labor — that would not diminish the quality of the publication.) I am not worried about the future of the Club.

I am, however, as usual worried about my ability to continue to get out entertaining and informative matter without more contributions. This has been a difficult issue to put together, and only in part because of the time taken up by processing renewal forms and checks (and digging grubs out of my lawn, etc., etc.). Perhaps the last issue's massive "Engine Chronicle" exhausted my inspirations and creative powers — at least temporarily. I need "adventure" and "human interest" material and technical matter. If you can produce neither, how about some questions? I have received very few in the past several months. Do not hesitate for fear your question is too elementary. Frequently, the seemingly-elementary question turns out not to be so when someone undertakes to answer it. Many of the best pieces I have done have been inspired by readers' questions. If you have a question or two, or would like to see a subject covered that has not been dealt with recently, please let me know. (Now I hope to hell 300 people don't all ask questions at once!)

Several years ago, soon after my taking over as Editor, H. J. Glass (#111) said that he hoped the publication would not be too much given over to, in his phrase, "social



**FOUNDED BY DAVE LEWIS**





chatter and administrative droning." Those words, so aptly chosen, and their admonition, so succinctly set forth, have haunted me ever since. Every time I set about a discourse on Club affairs, after it has run two or three paragraphs there is the Awful Presence of that phrase, elbowing its way into my consciousness. Am I "droning"? What, I wonder, will Jay Glass, my Conscience, think of this?

Well, Jay, and everyone else for that matter, I ask that you bear with me here for just a few more paragraphs, because I think it worthwhile, every year at least, to set down a few items which are in the nature of Basic Information. These follow.

### PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

However much you would like it to be so, this is not a monthly publication. There are nine issues of The Torque Tube per "membership year" (September 1 - August 31) plus a roster generally published in February. There are not 12 smaller issues because I cannot operate on so fast a turn-around, and there are not six bigger issues because I once proposed that and everyone screamed Bull Shit about the idea. So, perhaps uniquely among car nut mags (or any other kind), The Torque Tube is neither a monthly, nor a bi-monthly, nor a quarterly, but rather whatever in hell one could call something that appears roughly every 5.777 weeks.

I say "roughly" because in truth it comes out on no tightly-fixed schedule, but rather when I get it done. (Somehow or other, I have coopered up, thrown together, devised, concocted and whomped up nine issues per year for seven years, and how I have managed to do so is to me a recurring marvel.) Notwithstanding that, here is a tentative — and I mean tentative — schedule of the remaining issues of Volume X:

2 - October 25  
3 - December 6  
4 - January 10  
5 - March 1

6 - April 3  
7 - May 15  
8 - June 19  
9 - July 31

Thus the months skipped are typically November, February and August. I put a month and year on page 1 of each issue just to locate that issue approximately in time, but the best way to keep track is by Volume and Number. Each September begins a new Volume, and this is the beginning of Volume X. Enough said about that.

### ADDRESS LABELS

These are produced by Steve Weinstein (#532), to whom manifold thanks are due. Your label sets forth your membership number and the date your membership expires. As to the latter, many of the labels for this issue will say "Aug. 31, '91". That is because the label program has not caught up with all the renewals. Do not call me about this; the labels will be updated as soon as possible.



## COVERS



*Editor at the wheel of Cecil Don's 1937 model 44 at Goat Rock on the California Coast (photo by Tony Weiss (#647)); Tony Weiss' 1938 Special in front of the Beringer Winery's Victorian Gothic mansion (photo by George Marshall (#82)). Both taken on the Club's West Coast Tour.*

## BACK ISSUES

I still have a good supply of all Vol. IX issues (Nos. 1-9; Sept. 1990-July 1991). These are \$3.25 each, postpaid in the U.S. and Canada (overseas members, please inquire). Some earlier issues may be obtained from Paul B. Culp, Jr. (#508), RR 4 - Box 411, Perkasio, PA 18944 (215/249-3166). Please contact Paul for availability and price.

## PATCHES, DECALS & JACKETS

Christmas is coming! Buy yourself a little gift. Embroidered cloth patches, approximately 3" x 5", showing the Club logo in red, white and blue, are \$3.50 each (\$4.00 overseas). Water-transfer decals, approximately 2" x 3" in the same design, are two for \$1.00 (\$1.50 overseas). Order these from the Editor.

Very nice Club jackets may be ordered from Mike Adler (#103). These have a large embroidered version of the Club logo on the back, and come in S, M, L, XL, and XXL. Quilt lined - \$95; flannel lined - \$85 (add \$5 for size XXL). This is not your usual silk-screened club jacket where the lettering starts to come off after a few cleanings, and in my opinion they are worth a premium price. Call Mike at 908/536-1478. (This is not a Club - financed deal; Mike put his own money into it.)



## BEHOLD THE SIGN!

A few years ago, I received an inquiry from one Peter B. Ives, Business Librarian at the Parish Memorial Library of the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque. It seemed that Mr. Ives had undertaken to do a study of car club magazines, and asked for information.

This, I thought, is not your usual "brain-picker", and to leave The Torque Tube out of such a scholarly inquiry would be a shame. So, I filled out his questionnaire and sent it off, along with two or three sample copies, and soon forgot the business.

Recently I received a letter from Mr. Ives, thanking me and enclosing a copy of a short article he wrote, which appeared in Serials Review, a publication presumably directed at libraries, and which will doubtless seem as obscure to most of us as The Torque Tube would to the overwhelming mass of mankind. In his letter, Mr. Ives said that he had originally intended to do a longer work, but found the job "overwhelming" and so limited himself to an "overview." The article will at least acquaint reference librarians with potential sources of information on antique and special interest automobiles, beyond those which they might find in their standard source materials.

I found Mr. Ives' article both interesting and well-done, and this evaluation is based only in minor part on the appearance of a Torque Tube issue in a photo showing an array of car club mags and a specific mention of our Club. As one might expect, publications — he examined no less than 152 different ones — range from the professionally-done, slick-paper, color-cover stuff (e.g. The Star (Mercedes)) to the typed-and-stapled-at-home copy-machine "newsletter" (e.g. The Kisselgraph). Most fall somewhere in between, as does this one, and most seem to have content broadly



similar to The Torque Tube's, although, I would boldly venture to assert, perhaps not so provocative and entertaining. Mr. Ives does not recommend that libraries subscribe to car club magazines, and one must agree: librarians are doubtless now burdened with a mass of periodicals of far greater importance to the overwhelming majority of inquiry and research. He does, however, suggest that it wouldn't hurt to know that they exist, and that many can be identified by a look through Collector Car Annual or Hemming's Vintage Auto Annual.

I will take the liberty of a brief quote from the opening paragraph of Mr. Ives' work:

"You are not likely to see The Sacred Octagon, Jowett Jive, or The Torque Tube at the newsstands, and almost never in public or academic libraries....In some ways, because of their elusiveness, automobile club magazines are the ultimate in fugitive literature...."

I thank him, not only for mentioning this mag, but also for doing so in the same sentence as The Sacred Octagon, a title even I must admit is without peer. Contemplate that name, my friends, and the fanatical devotion that spawned it. "Octagon" alone would have been adequate for the MG Car Club, neatly enough identifying the matter to be found in the pages of its magazine. The Sacred Octagon, however, is altogether something else, and with every issue its readers are reassured that nothing — in the temporal world at least — is more important than their fanaticism. Regrettably, perhaps, Buick used over the years several different logos, none of which is so clearly identified with the marque as the octagon is with the MG. We cannot achieve the same mystical symbolism, friends: "The Sacred Tube", "The Sacred Valve-in-Head", "The Sacred Deer Head" all fall so far short as to invite ridicule, not devotion. "The Torque Tube" is as close to an ecce signum as we can get, although our own devotion may be no less intense than that of the MG fanatics.

I need also to thank Mr. Ives for settling a question that has troubled me for some time: just what is it that I am writing here, what is this publication? It is "fugitive literature", folks, so identified by an expert in the great and bewildering world of periodical publications. Perhaps that phrase is, to librarians, only one small part of their lingua franca, but it burst upon my brain like Stout Cortez' first view of the Pacific. Fugitive Literature. I love it. It is not unlikely that you will see it again.



Here is one of Joe Giordano's restored vehicles, a nice '38 Century sedan.



## Photo Album: Joe's Place

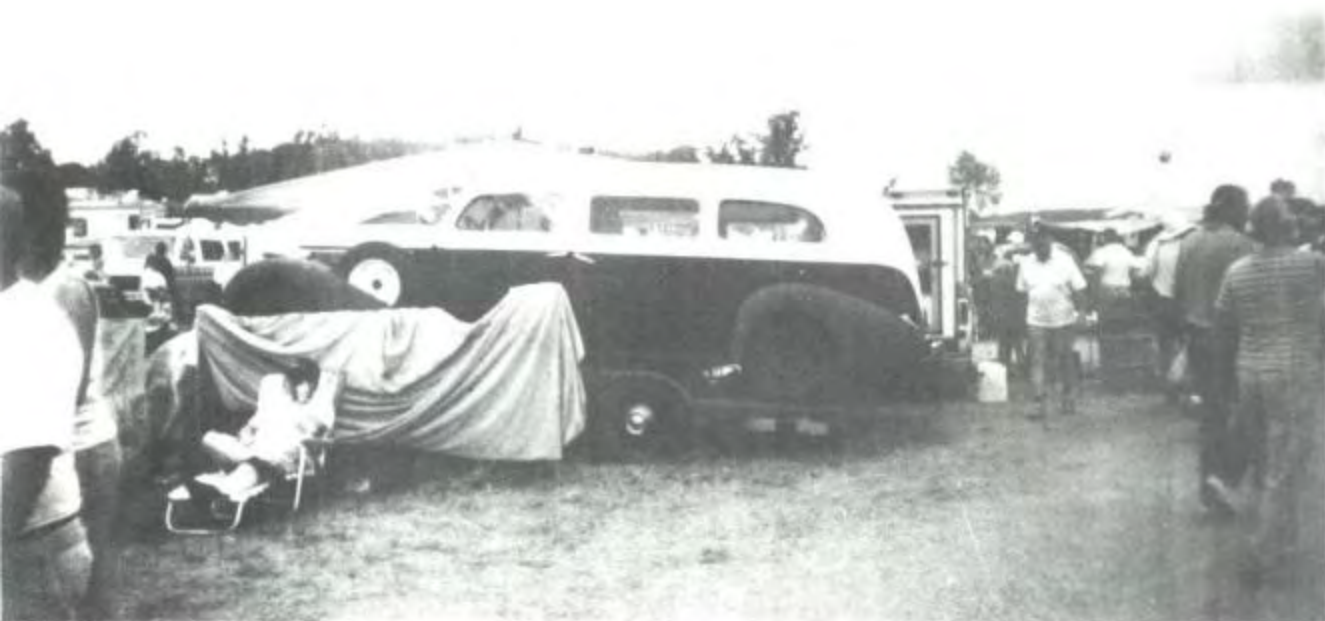


Joe Giordano (#333) of Liberty, Missouri, has lots of room for parts cars, or maybe we could call some of them big "projects". From left to right here are '38 Olds 8 convertible (hidden under tarp); '37 model 67; '64 Olds 88; '37 model 47; '37 hearse; '38 model 41; '38 model 46; '37 model 46-C. Quite a collection. If I had a big field like that, God knows what I might do.



From time to time in the past, we have probed the mystery of convertible top windows. The frame shown here, against a background of very tired '37 deck lid, is, according to Joe Giordano, from an original 1938 top. Very interesting.





At the big Iola, Wisconsin swap meet this past summer, Dan Murtz (#835) spotted this 1938 Special "stretched" into an ambulance. "It would be sitting in my garage now," Dan wrote, "but the wife said no!" (Mrs. Murtz appears directly behind the left rear fender.) The car is said to have been stored for some time at the Sparta (Wisconsin) Airport. The owner was interested in selling. (Contact Dan or the Editor for more information.)





# **From Out of the Past: Buicks in Europe~ Part 2**

## ***POLISH ARMY BUICKS***

**BY ERIK BJERRING (#654) - HELSINGE, DENMARK**

In the last issue I told you something about the fleet of Buicks used by the National Police of Denmark before World War II. As I mentioned then, the first General Motors assembly plant outside the U.S.A. was established in Copenhagen in 1923. I was with G.M. in Denmark as a District Manager for 22 years and am now semi-retired. In the first half of 1990, I had the job of organizing a dealer network in Poland, after the fall of the old U.S.S.R. - dominated communist government. During this assignment, I found a book on Polish Army vehicles, and was astonished to find 1937 and 1938 Buicks pictured in it. I find it quite fascinating that Buicks were involved in fighting Hitler at such an early stage of the War. I asked my assistant in Poland to attempt a translation of the pertinent part of the Polish text into English, which I hope that our Editor can put into final literary form. Here it is, from Polish Army Cars, Part II, Chapter 3.

Luxurious American passenger cars, BUICK 90 (engine 140 hp) and 41 (107 hp), were brought to Poland for assembly under the licensing agreement for importation of passenger automobiles and trucks from GMC (General Motors Corp.). Licensing was obtained in 1936 by Warszawskie Towarzystwo Zakladow Mechanicznych, company name: "Lilpop, Rau & Lowenstein" S.A.

With the car's model change in 1937 and 1938, under the licensing agreement, Lilpop, Rau & Lowenstein, S.A. began BUICK's assembly. These modern limousines (with independent front suspension connected with coil springs, automatic starter, heated (untranslatable word) collector, gear box - four forward and one reverse fully synchronized, radio etc.) were assembled with American parts and domestic (Polish) components (i.e. tires, batteries, upholstery (interior), paint, brake fluid, oil, grease and tools.) The cars had all steel body, 4-doors. Production included BUICK 90 version of 7-8 passenger cars with driver's compartment separated by glass which could be operated from the passenger's section.

In the beginning of June 1938, 10 BUICKS type 90 of great monetary value of 198,000 zlotych, were given by the company to the National Defense Fund. (To compare, the car price for FIAT 500 assembled in Warsaw, one of the less expensive in the Polish market, was 3800 zlotych.)

"Given to patriotism the board of directors of 'Lilpop, Rau and Lowenstein' decided to present a gift for the disposition by the Commander of the Army of 10 BUICKS 90. The automobiles were a gift to the National Defense Fund." (From the speech by the president of Rady Nadzorczej Spolki (Advisory Coalition).)

These cars were used by the Ministry of the Army and by higher officers. A few of them were seen in Hungary at the end of September 1939, driven by clerks of the Ministry evacuated from Poland.

## *McLaughlin Among the Peerage*



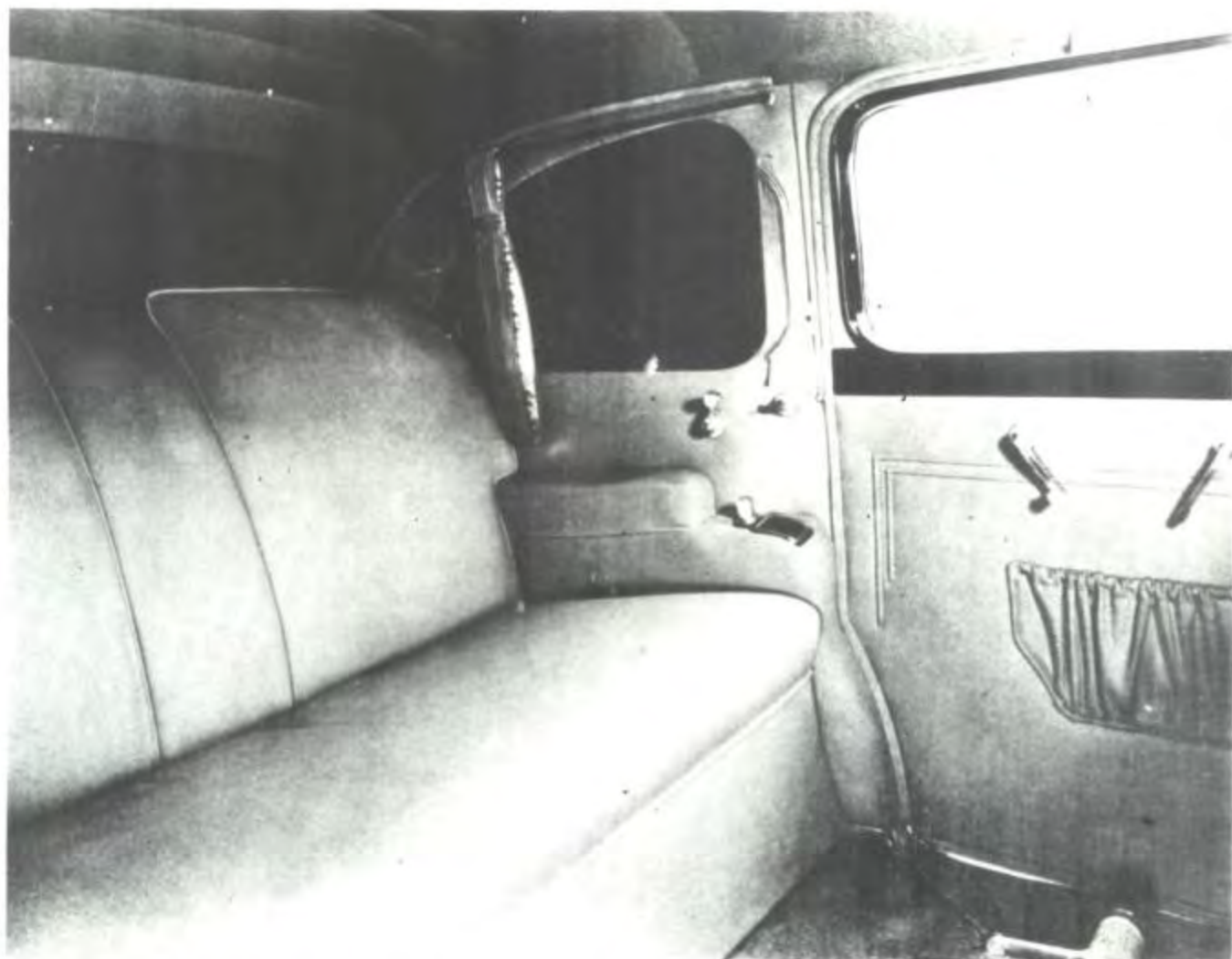
1938 McLaughlin-Buick Limited modified for the Duchess of Kent. The car was fitted with Lucas headlamps in place of the stock equipment. Her Grace preferred not to be gawked at by the masses when riding in her car, and had installed an early version of one-way glass. This was called "purdah" glass, after the Hindu word for a veil, or curtain behind which the women of a household were secluded in India. (Photos courtesy of The McLaughlin-Buick Club of Canada and Bob Ward (#114).

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks again to Erik Bjerring for another fascinating peek into pre-War Europe. I am surprised at how well Buick competed with European makes in finding favor with "titled" buyers and the upper ranges of "official" use, and suspect there are more such tales to be told, if only we knew where to look. It may be that Buick's popularity in the late 1930s can be attributed to several factors: (1) the choice by King Edward VIII of McLaughlin-Buicks for his personal conveyance, an event which surely rocked the British auto-manufacturing establishment back on its heels; (2) a disinclination on the part of other European nations to patronize the Germans, Hitler's behavior being what it was; (3) a less-than-favorable experience with the reliability of the prestige English marques; (4) some good marketing work by General Motors. (I am reminded here of a piece I read a few years ago, in which the author said that his father, an Englishman of some means, found it necessary to have two Bentleys, as one was almost always undergoing repair.) The "Baltic Republics" have recently been much in the news, and we may here recall that through the work of Bill Shipman (#617) we have already learned that, just prior to the War, the President of Estonia had a 1938 Roadmaster (See Vol. VIII, No. 4).

Note continued next page.





*Interior view of the Duchess of Kent's 1938 McLaughlin Limited.*

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One photograph from the Polish book, which I could not reproduce, appears to show five 1937 Buick Limiteds in front of an office or apartment building in Warsaw; a Buick catalog picture of a '38 is also included in the book. As it seems that the Army Buicks were '38s, the photograph probably shows other cars.

The work of Erik's "Polish assistant" seemed a bit rough in spots, and I was not sure that he did not leave something out. I discovered that the mother of a co-worker has a friend who is a Polish emigre, and he generously also undertook a translation. The passages above are an amalgam of both translators' work. I suspect that the original text in Polish was not too artfully written in the first instance. I tried to put the material into at least semi-literary English, while still preserving some of its original flavor — insofar as I could divine what that was. In any event, we know more about Polish Buicks than we did before.

I cannot explain the reference to four forward speeds; perhaps the Polish cars used European transmissions, but the more likely explanation is that it was simply a mistake in the original. In case you haven't doped it out, a "zloty" is the unit of Polish money, but I have no idea how the zloty compared to the U.S. dollar in 1938. (Nor do I have any idea of that today, either, because the zloty is not a freely-convertible currency.) All we can say for sure is that in 1938 a Polish Buick Limited was worth more than five times as much as a Polish Fiat 500.

# WEST COAST CLUB MEET

*A beautiful line-up at Goat Rock on the California coast. (Photo by Bill Schaeffer (#622).)*



## WEST COAST MEET - JULY 21-23

### By the Editor

Our 1991 West Coast Club Meet was not only a great adventure, but also a striking contrast to the BCA National Meet that immediately preceded it. By necessity, a big BCA meet is a sort of sedentary event, given over to display of cars, inspection and admiration of the display, the picking over of parts, the telling of tales in a hospitality room, and the enjoyment — or endurance, as the case may be — of the traditional banquet and awards. While such events are an essential and major part of the "old-car" hobby, and well serve to bind us together, they necessarily omit what is to me the best part: recapturing the character of the great cars of the past through the experience of driving them. Our West Coast Tour supplied that experience in liberal measure, and gave me a dose of romance and adventure that I can savor for some time to come.\*

We met at noon in the parking lot of the Red Lion Inn in Sacramento: twelve '37 or '38 Buicks, plus a '41, a '51, and a '67. Cecil Don (#637) who recently acquired a '37 Limited, generously loaned me his '37 Special two-door, which proved to be an excellent road car. Cecil, bearing with him his wife Shirley and his mother-in-law, took off in the lead; I was about in the middle of the pack, and Carl and Judy Dahl (#868) brought up the rear in their '37 Special coupe. (Those three cars were supplied by Cecil with excellent portable two-way radios, which proved to be very useful.) The Dons

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\*Lest anyone get the wrong idea here, I mean "romance" in the sense of fantasy or recreation of heroic past events.



and Dahls had organized the whole event, and it was a pleasure for me to just follow along and enjoy it.

The first leg of our tour provided a varied picture of the northern California landscape -- and occasionally some pungent odors as we passed ranches where manure had recently been put to use. We wound through the mountains on a two-lane road that tested the mettle of both driver and car. Fortunately no one had any serious overheating problems, flat tires, or any other misfortunes. About half-way through this scenic ride, after I had decided that I was having a hell of a good time, I noticed that in many places the terrain fell away rather steeply not far from the edge of the road, that the base of the defile could often not be seen, and that the State of California had not seen fit to install anything remotely resembling guard rails. (Perhaps this is a consequence of the notorious Proposition 13, or perhaps it is simply thought that guard rails spoil the view, but they seemed to be non-existent in California.) That made me a bit nervous for a while, but finally I concluded that for me there could be no more fitting conveyance into the Dark Valley of Death than a '37 Buick, even if it was not my own Buick, that Cecil would gladly sacrifice his car for so noble a Final Exit, and that, if it were to occur, the event would doubtless become a Legend.

We descended into the Napa Valley and on to the home of Chuck and Claudia VanKoten (#388). Chuck, it is plain, has made some money in the construction business, and has put the fruits of his labors to good use. Besides the VanKotens' dwelling, which is beautifully designed and finished but not pretentious, we found a re-created old-time gas station and a complete auto restoration shop, with rooms for assembly, painting,



*Karren Schaeffer looks like she's about to do something -- maybe lead us all in song? -- in front of the Napa Valley Inn. The Schaeffers' 1937 Century and Cecil Don's 1937 Special (with Editor inside) complete the picture. (Photo by Bill Schaeffer (#622).)*



*Bill Schaeffer (#622) with his 1937 model 67 in front of the "old-time gas station" at the home of Charles and Claudia Van Koten on the West Coast Tour. (Photo by George Marshall (#82).)*

storage of parts, and more. Besides inspecting all of this, we could view Chuck's superb '37 80-C, an excellent '37 61 that Chuck modestly calls "just a driver," a work-in-progress '37 66-S, and an extremely nice '28 Chevrolet roadster. The VanKotens placed before us an array of food and drink of all kinds, from which no one could go away thirsty or hungry. Chuck declined all offers to have the participants share in the cost of this spread, insisting that he was honored to have us visit him. A big "thank-you" must go to Chuck and Claudia for their gracious hospitality.

After I had parked Cecil's Special in the VanKoten driveway, I was approached by a smiling gentleman who looked familiar, but whom I did not immediately recognize. "Hello, Bill," said the smiling face, "do you remember me? I am Jose Pardo from Colombia. We met at Flint in 1987." I was almost struck dumb. Somehow, Jose and his wife had been conveyed to the VanKoten home, but no one had told me they would be participants in our tour. "What next?" I thought. Thereafter, the Pardos rode with me and were good company, my only regret being that Mrs. Pardo does not speak English and I cannot speak Spanish.

From Napa we moved on to the Napa Valley Lodge at Yountville, an excellent motel. The Dons and Dahls had arranged for a hospitality room, which was comfortable and well-stocked with goodies. After all of that, only a few of us could eat any dinner at all, and for the first time in my life I contented myself with a salad.

On Monday morning we rolled through the "wine country" to the Beringer winery, founded by Germans in the 19th Century, which features beautiful grounds, a magnificent





*Cecil Don (#637), wife Shirley, and mother-in-law in Cecil's 1937 Limited at Goat Rock. (Photo by Tony Weiss (#647).)*

Victorian Gothic mansion, an entertaining tour, and, of course, the expected sampling of its products and gift shop. More gift shops followed, including one devoted entirely to Christmas items ranging in price from the trivial to the preposterous, along with a Mexican lunch at an establishment called the Red Hen. (Fortunately for me, a Midwesterner in a land of exotic foods, there were a few things on the menu I could pronounce and digest.)

In the afternoon we moved west toward the coast. Well-know probably to Californians, but startling to me, was the change in weather as we approached the sea. Where inland it had been warm and sunny, within ten miles of the coast it was overcast and cool, and I wished I had brought a sweater. After a brief rest period at the Bodega Coast Inn at Bodega Bay (approximately 50 miles north of San Francisco), we headed north on the famous California Route 1 to Goat Rock, where one can drive down to the beach on a road that demands concentration and a heavy foot on the brake pedal. (No guard rails here, either.) We lined up the cars against a background of the offshore rocks, and many pictures were taken. (A bit of serendipity: we encountered a professional photographer who had been working the scenery, and Cecil negotiated a deal for some Buick pix as well.)

Return to the Inn was followed by an excellent dinner, and that followed by a brief meeting at which we all decided to do it again next year. Maybe Yosemite. I can hardly wait.

On Tuesday, the Dons, the Dahls and I headed back toward Sacramento. We dropped the Pardos off at the Napa Airport, where they were planning to meet friends and travel on by air to the big aircraft show at Oshkosh, Wisconsin. (Jose is president of the National Museum of Aeronautics in Colombia.) I turned Cecil's '37 back to him at Sacramento, and reluctantly left the World of Romance and Adventure.

I will conclude by thanking Cecil, Shirley, Carl and Judy for planning and organizing a Terrific Event. I would not have had the nerve to arrange so ambitious a tour, but it turned out beautifully.



*Tony Weiss (#647) photographed his own 1938 Special at Goat Rock.*



## BUICKS and BIPLANES







*The 1937 Century two-door sedan owned by Jose Pardo (#558) of Cali, Colombia is shown here with another '37 owned by a friend of Jose's and some vintage Stearman biplanes. The aircraft are painted blue and yellow, mimicking the scheme used by the United States Army Air Corps in the 1930s. Besides being a Buick fancier, Jose is president of the National Air Museum of Colombia.*





# TECHNICAL TIPS



## INSTALLING A CARTER WCD CARBURETOR

In the last issue, I reported some dissatisfaction with the performance of my Stromberg AA-2 carburetor. Even after two rebuilds and considerable additional tinkering, it did not work well at low speeds and seemed to be prone to both flooding and starving for no clearly-apparent reasons. Some people seem to be satisfied with the original Stromberg AA and AAV models, and others, including Dave Lewis, have little or no use for them. One thing that no one has been able to do with them is make the chokes work right. (The preferred methods of calibrating those chokes in the old days were to: (a) use a special tool; or (b) obtain a choke known to work correctly and set the bad one off the good one. Inasmuch as the tools and good chokes are now gone, these repair methods are clearly unavailing today. Moreover, repair parts seem likewise to have disappeared, and even if any were to turn up amid the boxes of odd shit that some parts vendors truck around, it is unlikely that either you or the vendors could recognize them.)

In the course of obtaining various engine parts from former member Bob Pipkin, I obtained a Carter WCD-series carb for a large engine. The number on the little brass tag on this thing could not be reconciled with any of my manuals or parts books, but the casting number on its base suggests 1950 or 1951 Buick.

Being now determined to see how well the Roadmaster can be made to run, and having already begun inching away from total authenticity (electric fuel pump, electric auxilliary fan, '49 engine parts), I decided to restore the Carter and try it out. My friend, engine rebuilder, and general wizard Ed Hunkins had already discovered that the engine idled much better with the unrestored Carter on it. Ed rebuilt the Carter using a considerable quantity of carb cleaner and a rebuild kit which he obtained from one of the specialists in Buick restoration parts. That left three problems to be solved: (1) a different heat riser would have to be contrived to fit the Carter choke; (2) a modification would have to be made to the '37 oil-bath air cleaner, which would not clear the Carter choke and fit down over the air horn; and (3) the throttle linkage would have to be modified.

The choke heat riser problem was solved with a "choke heater" kit obtained from NAPA (6101116). This consists essentially of an insulated tube with a fitting on one end that can be screwed into the Carter choke and a sheet metal box on the other that can be clamped to the exhaust manifold with large diameter hose clamps. This costs on the order of \$25. It seems to work. There is another type of kit which may work better or look less odd on the '37 engine, but this requires drilling a hole clear through the exhaust manifold: a stainless steel tube is inserted in the hole and the heat riser goes into the tube. We decided that this was too extreme a modification, at least for a start. Once the hole is in the manifold, of course, it's there forever; moreover, I would not advise drilling the manifold unless it is first removed from the engine: the little chips will probably be blown out through the muffler, but what if a few go the other way? In any case, the "stove" atop the center section of the manifold can simply be left as it is; it does not communicate with the interior passage of the manifold and there will be no leak.



The oil-bath air cleaner on my car never fit very well over the carburetor air horn to begin with. I believe, but am not certain, that in at least some later production the air cleaners were changed to provide a longer cylindrical fitting with two clamping bands. Mine has only one band. Because the Carter choke is mounted higher on carburetor than is the case with the original Stromberg, the air cleaner would not go down over the top of the air horn. This was solved, temporarily at least, by contriving a metal cylinder that fits over the top of the air horn, and is held on by a big hose clamp. (Thank goodness for hose clamps!) The air cleaner fits down over the cylinder, which is slightly tapered. I think a more permanent solution will be needed here, because the thing tends to leak, and a hose clamp on top of one's carburetor does look a bit odd. A modification to the air cleaner is probably the way to go.

One problem with using later-year carburetors is that in some of them the action of the throttle linkage is the reverse of that on the original, or cannot be mated to the original shaft that connects to the pedal. An additional problem for '37 owners is that the later carb will have no provision for attachment of the arm that operates the intake manifold-mounted starter switch. The former problem was solved in my case by making a simple bell crank; this was welded to the crank mechanism on the left side of the carb that controls the throttle opening and accelerator pump. It was also possible to attach the starter switch operating arm to the bell crank, and there is enough provision for adjustment built into the switch mechanism so that dimensions were not critical. The bell crank would not work right unless its upper end was pulled forward by a spring (in addition to the spring on the shaft from the pedal), to return the throttle-shaft crank on the carb to idle speed position. A spring was easily connected to the clamp that holds the fuel line in place.

I wanted to preserve the operation of the '37 starter switch because I thought that would make things look less like I'd changed carburetors, and because I did not want to try rehabilitating the carb-mounted switch on the Carter. I'm not sure I came out with permanent solutions to the problems discussed above. Although Ed's heat riser, air cleaner, and throttle linkage modifications are ingenious, it is fairly obvious that one is not looking at a "factory" installation. After the car gets put away for the winter, I will reconsider them.

## MORE ON ENGINE MODIFICATIONS

Some time ago, Thom Schuttish (#6) sent me a copy of Hot Rod Magazine for August 1950. Back in those days, which some of us remember, most of the "gear heads" were "hopping up" Ford V-8s with aluminum high-compression heads, Edelbrock manifolds, headers, straight-through "Hollywood" mufflers, and other goodies, and the engines that would pack the old flathead into permanent oblivion were just appearing on the horizon. Obscured by the legion of Kalifornia Kustom Ford Fanatics was a group of Buick enthusiasts who found that the straight-8 could be tweaked for more "speed and power". A HotRod article by then-Technical Editor Don Francisco discussed these tweakings. Some highlights of this article are set forth below. I have omitted some of the more extreme modifications on the theory that few of us will want "full-race" engines. The modifications discussed are offered here as something to think about, and not necessarily in all cases as something to actually do, and I am not endorsing any engine modifications beyond those clearly stated in prior issues to be satisfactory.

1. Bore. Hot Rod claimed that the cylinder walls are heavy enough to allow an increase of 0.125. This modification alone will increase piston displacement in the large engine from 320 to 343. Obviously, before one decides on a re-bore of this magnitude, availability of pistons and rings should be investigated. I have never seen

any catalog listing for pistons oversized by more than 0.080. The old Buick parts books do not list anything beyond 0.030. It probably makes sense to determine the extent of a re-bore on the availability of pistons, rather than to decide on a bore size and then end up trying to have pistons custom-made to fit it.

2. Cylinder Head. The article says that it is possible to mill as much as 0.200 from the head by removing a small amount of material from the combustion chamber to prevent interference with the wedge-top piston, and 0.175 can usually be removed without other modifications; however, according to the author, either of these modifications will probably require "special fuel" (e.g. aviation gas). "Milling the head 0.100 and installing a thin head gasket has been found to be a good combination for general use when premium fuel is used exclusively." (Don't try this with a '37 head and later-year pistons. "Premium" fuel in the 1950s would probably have been in the 90-octane range.) There is considerable discussion of "porting" — i.e. enlarging the intake passages in the head and the portion of the valve passages around the stems. This was a common "hop-up" practice; how much real performance increase resulted I do not know, and I suspect it may not have been worth all the effort spent on it. The article states that "intake passages in the head may be ported to the depth of the counter bore without trouble and the valve ports...may be enlarged to the smaller diameter of the valve seat. ...The intake guides may be cut off at the roof of the intake passage to reduce the restriction in the valve ports." You're on your own with this.

3. Connecting Rods. As might be expected, the author favors use of insert-bearing rods.

4. Cam. "Stock camshaft grinds are on the mild side and engine performance can be improved considerably by regrinding. Various grinds are available...." Even assuming the existence of people who know how to do the "various grinds" today, I would approach a change in "grind" — i.e. the profiles of the camshaft lobes — with considerable caution, especially if you like smooth running at low RPM.

5. Push Rods & Lifters. What we typically call "lifters" the article calls "cam followers" — a term I have not seen used in some time. Stock solid lifters and push rods are held to be entirely satisfactory. Hydraulic lifters are dismissed as unsuitable for high engine speeds.

6. Intake Manifolds and Carburetors. The author says that "the manifolds used on 1941 and 1942 cars equipped with compound carburetion may be adapted to straight dual carburetion with excellent results" — I think we knew that. The original '41-'42 compound arrangement made use of a complete two-barrel carb on the front and a rear containing only idling and main metering circuits. An air-velocity-operated valve limited operation of the rear carb to the higher speed ranges. This was one of those ideas that looked good on paper, but didn't turn out that well in practice. The rear carb tended to gum up from disuse, and then, when you wanted it, it wasn't there. A better deal is to use two standard carbs and connect the throttles so they will open and close in unison. "Two small carburetors may be used on a large engine, in place of two large carburetors, to improve low speed operation and economy with only a small sacrifice in top speed performance. Main metering jets in large carburetors (Stromberg) should be increased to approximately 0.052 inch and to approximately 0.046 inch in small carburetors."

7. Exhaust System. The compound carburetion manifold is "entirely suitable" and easily adapted to dual pipes and mufflers.



8. Clutch. The author recommends that the Buick diaphragm-type pressure plate be replaced with a conventional spring pressure plate, such as the Borg and Beck 4050. Factory discs (driven plate) are satisfactory.

9. Ignition. The article recommends changing the original breaker point arrangement to an overlapping set-up by adding another set of breaker points, or by changing the distributor cam to four lobes instead of eight and using two coils. (Don't ask me how to do this, because I have no idea.)

There is a good deal more, including general engine rebuild advice, but the foregoing seems to be enough for now. If you would like a copy of the entire Hot Rod article send SASE to the Editor.

*I am sorry there is not more technical material this time. I ran fresh out of ideas, and could not delay this issue any longer. In any event, there were lots of photos to include, as well as some material left over from the summer months, which I could not find room for in the last issue. Next month, perhaps, if no other inspirations strike me or no contributions appear in the mailbox, I will repeat some of the better technical pieces from earlier years.*



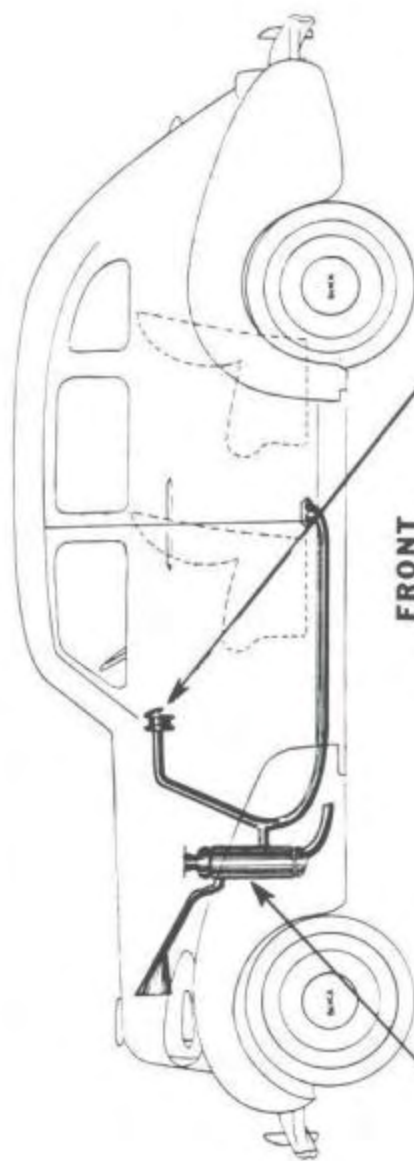
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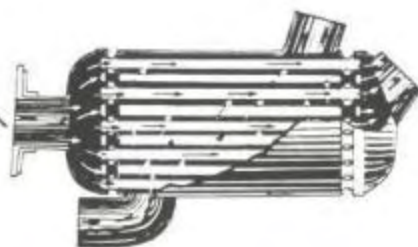
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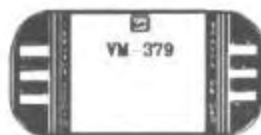
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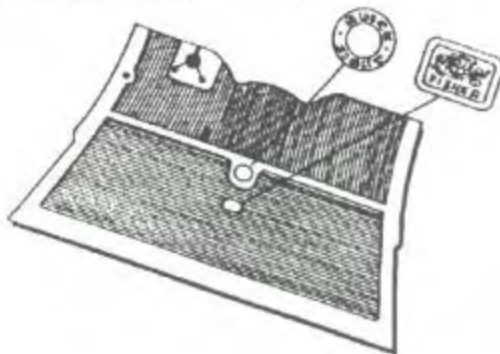
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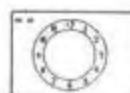
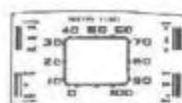
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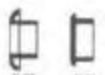
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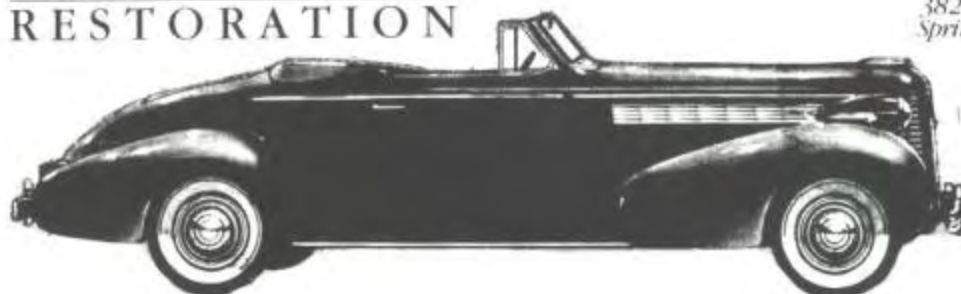
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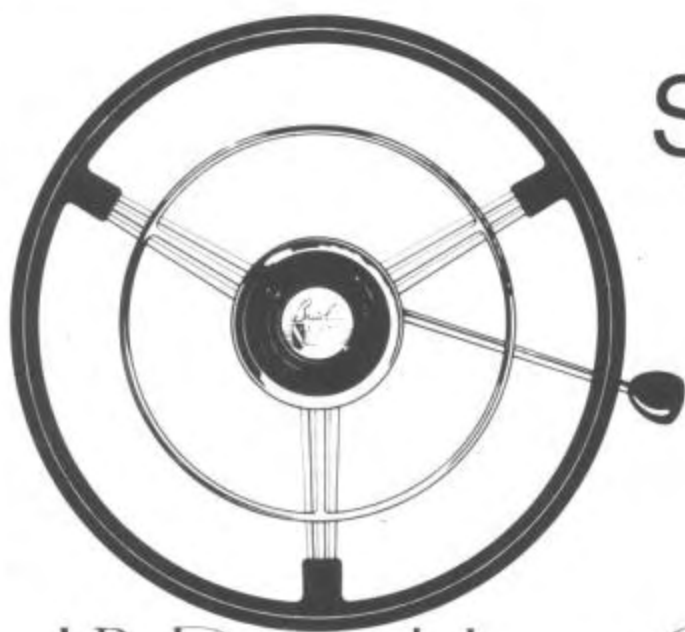
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